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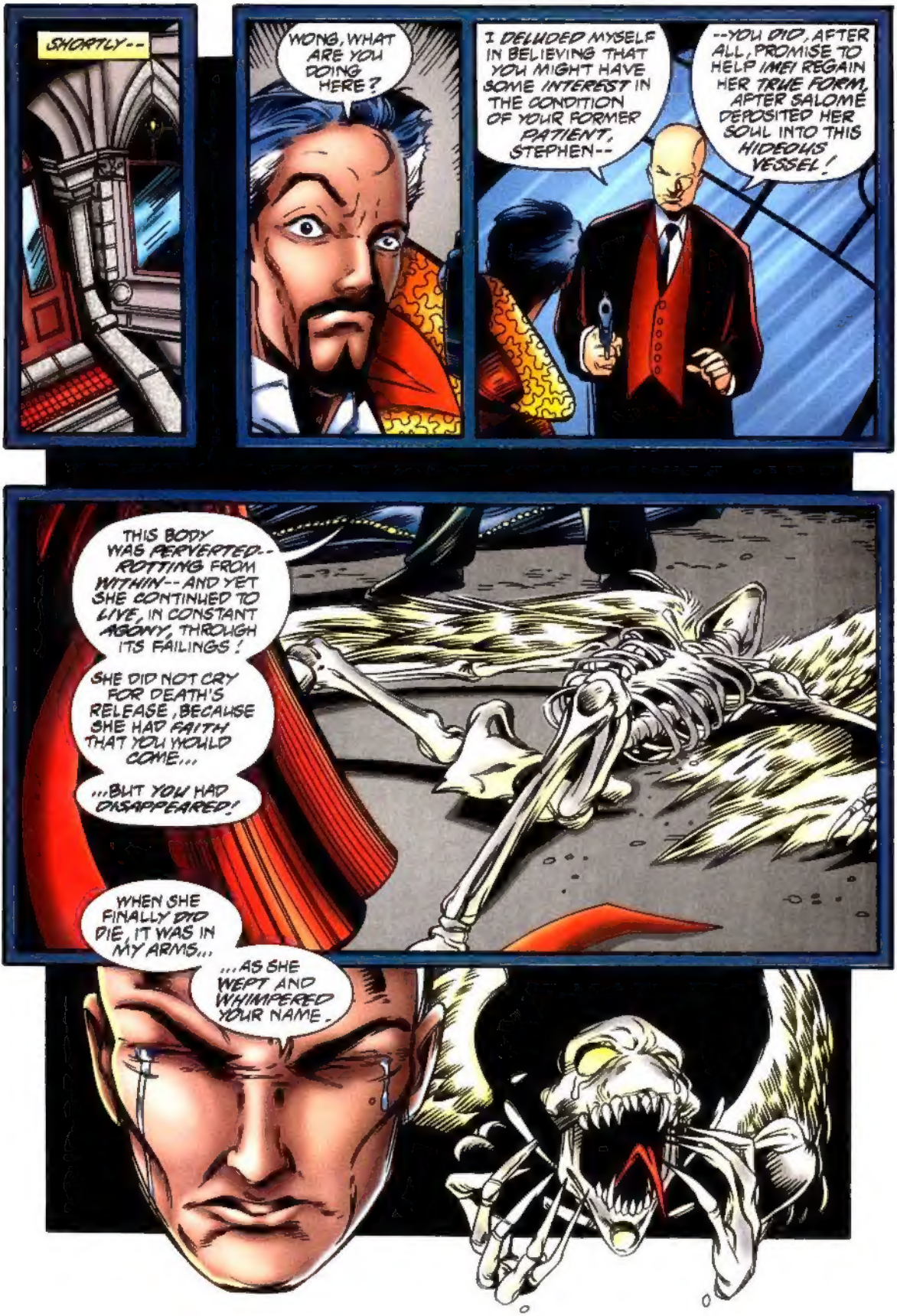
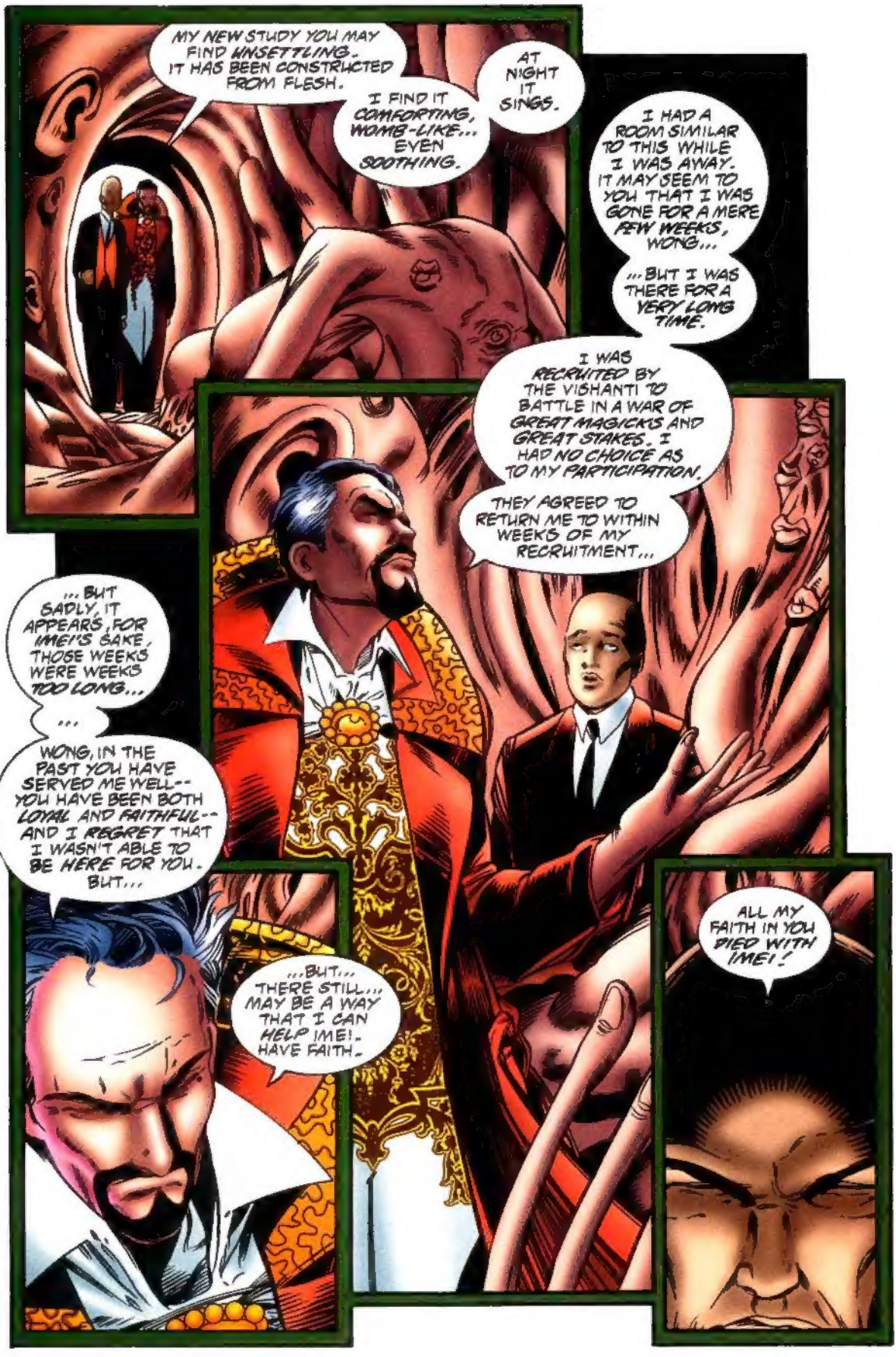
STEPHEN STRANGE THOUGHT HE HAD FORGOTTEN HOW TO BE HUMAN.
REMOVED FROM HUMANITY AS HE HAD BEEN--
--FOR AS LONG AS HE HAD BEEN--
CUT'N'CURL
VILLAGE PRODUCE
12 BLEECKER ST. VILLAGE PRODUCE
--HE FELT HE HAD LOST TOUCH WITH ALL THE BRIGHT AND FRESH THINGS, THE SHARP AND TINGLING EMOTIONS THAT WELL UP WITHIN US AND REMIND US WE'RE ALIVE.
HE WAS AFRAID HE HAD FORGOTTEN...
BUT ON THIS MORNING...
the Palette
--IN THIS CITY--
COFFEE
--IN THIS VILLAGE--
--IT ALL COMES BACK TO HIM.

WHA--?!
THUD
BY THE HOSTS...
...WHAT ABOMINATION IS THIS?
--DEAD NOW-- IF IT EVER LIVED.
WHO... WHAT WOULD CREATE THIS?
SINCE FORSAKING THE POWER OF THE YISHANTI--
--I MUST NOW EMPOWER THE EYE OF AGAMOTTO WITH THE MAGIC I HAVE ACCESSED THROUGH THE SYZYGY*--
*SEE LAST ISSUE.--BOBBIE
--THIS CHANGING MAGIC I NOW WIELD--
--THIS CATASTROPHE MAGIC!
C-k-k!..

CURIOUS. A TRAIL--MAGICAL IN ORIGIN...
...LEADING TO THE SOURCE OF THIS--
--EH!
THIS HOUSE--!
--IT REEKS OF TAINTED MAGIC!
--A MAGIC OF DECAY AND DISEASE--
--STEEPED IN MADNESS!
THE HOUSE WAS EVIDENTLY SUPPOSED TO CONTAIN IT... TOO POWERFUL ...IT'S LEAKING OUT--
--REACHING OUT TO INFECT AND POISON THE NEIGHBORHOOD AROUND IT!
AT THIS RATE IT WILL SOON WASH THE WORLD IN ITS PUTRESCENCE!
EVEN NOW, I CAN FEEL ITS CORRUPTING INFLUENCE DRAWING NEAR!
MUST PREPARE MYSELF FOR BATTLE--
--AND HOPE THAT I AM DEFT ENOUGH WITH MY NEW MAGIC TO REMOVE THIS CANCER BEFORE IT SPREADS!


SHORTLY--
WONG, WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
I DELUDED MYSELF IN BELIEVING THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE SOME INTEREST IN THE CONDITION OF YOUR FORMER PATIENT, STEPHEN--
--YOU DID, AFTER ALL, PROMISE TO HELP ME! REGAIN HER TRUE FORM, AFTER SALOME DEPOSITED HER SOUL INTO THIS HIDEOUS VESSEL!
THIS BODY WAS PERVERTED-- ROTTING FROM WITHIN-- AND YET SHE CONTINUED TO LIVE, IN CONSTANT AGONY, THROUGH ITS FAILINGS!
SHE DID NOT CRY FOR DEATH'S RELEASE, BECAUSE SHE HAD FAITH THAT YOU WOULD COME...
...BUT YOU HAD DISAPPEARED!
WHEN SHE FINALLY DID DIE, IT WAS IN MY ARMS...
...AS SHE WEPT AND WHIMPERED YOUR NAME.

SO--
--YOUR PAIN AND YOUR ANGER WOULD HAVE YOU GREET ME LIKE THIS?
BZZZZZZ
WHAT--?
THE POWER OF CHANGE.
I CALL IT CATASTROPHE MAGIC.
FASH
DIFFERENT, ISN'T IT?
COME UPSTAIRS TO MY STUDY. WE NEED TO TALK... OLD FRIEND.


MY NEW STUDY YOU MAY FIND UNSETTLING. IT HAS BEEN CONSTRUCTED FROM FLESH.
I FIND IT COMFORTING, WOMB-LIKE... EVEN SOOTHING.
AT NIGHT IT SINGS.
I HAD A ROOM SIMILAR TO THIS WHILE I WAS AWAY. IT MAY SEEM TO YOU THAT I WAS GONE FOR A MERE FEW WEEKS, WONG...
...BUT I WAS THERE FOR A VERY LONG TIME.
I WAS RECRUITED BY THE VISHANTI TO BATTLE IN A WAR OF GREAT MAGICKS AND GREAT STAKES. I HAD NO CHOICE AS TO MY PARTICIPATION.
THEY AGREED TO RETURN ME TO WITHIN WEEKS OF MY RECRUITMENT...
...BUT SADLY, IT APPEARS, FOR IMEI'S SAKE, THOSE WEEKS WERE WEEKS TOO LONG...
...
WONG, IN THE PAST YOU HAVE SERVED ME WELL-- YOU HAVE BEEN BOTH LOYAL AND FAITHFUL-- AND I REGRET THAT I WASN'T ABLE TO BE HERE FOR YOU. BUT...
...BUT... THERE STILL... MAY BE A WAY THAT I CAN HELP IMEI. HAVE FAITH.
ALL MY FAITH IN YOU DIED WITH IMEI!

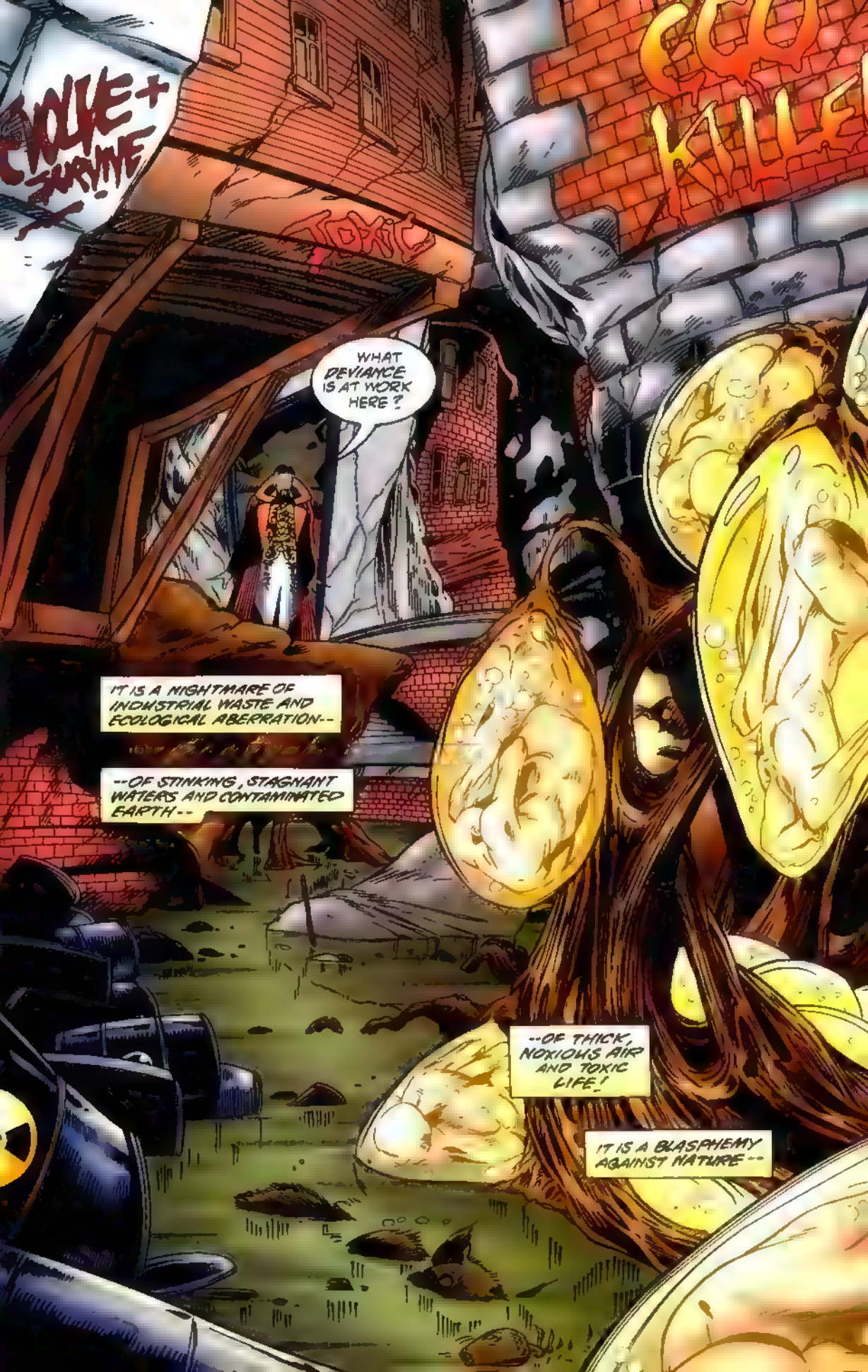
MEANWHILE, AT THE DOOR--
COME ON! THE DOORBELL CAN'T BE BROKEN!
YOU'RE A MAGICIAN, FOR PETE'S SAKE--IF SOMETHING'S BROKEN, YOU JUST TWITCH YOUR NOSE...
JEEZ, FURY, WHAT ARE YOU EVEN DOING HERE? YOU GOT ALL THE MANPOWER AND TECHNOLOGY OF SHIELD AT YOUR DISPOSAL...
...AND YOU STILL CAN'T SEEM TO TURN UP THE PUNISHER!
SO YOU FIGURE THAT MAYBE STRANGE CAN LOOK INTO HIS CRYSTAL BALL OR WHATEVER--
EXCUSE ME,, COLONEL FURY?
I WAS HOPING I MIGHT HAVE A WORD WIT' YOU, WHILE YOU KEEP YOUR HANDS WHERE WE CAN SEE 'EM.
IT'S COME TO MY ATTENTION THAT BOTH OF US ARE SEARCHING FOR A MUTUAL ACQUAINTANCE--

--NAMELY, FRANK CASTLE--THE PUNISHER!
Y'SEE, MY ORGANIZATION'S LAID OUT SERIOUS MONEY ON CASTLE--HE'S GONNA MAKE ME AN' MY BOYS RICH--
28
--AN' YOU'RE THE GUY'S GONNA LEAD US RIGHT TO 'IM!
SORRY, MUGSY--NO CAN DO!
I GOT A TENNIS LESSON THIS AFTERNOON AT TWO.
HUNH?
KLIK
KLIK
SHIEL
HEY, YOU SHOULD BE THANKING ME, PAL--I JUST SAVED YOUR LIFE! BECAUSE IF YOU HAD GOTTEN ANYWHERE NEAR CASTLE--
--HE WOULD'VE HAD YOUR BUTT FOR BREAKFAST!
GET THEM OUTTA HERE, VICK!
AND I'M OUTTA HERE, TOO, STRANGE--SOME "SORCERER SUPREME"...
...CAN'T EVEN FIX A DOOR-BELL.

THIS NEW MAGIC IS DERIVED FROM CHANGE AND ALTERED COINCIDENCE. I DISCOVERED IT IN THE VISHANTI LIBRARIES--
--OF COURSE, THAT WAS ALL IN THEORY... I'VE YET TO SEE HOW IT HANDLES "IN THE FIELD".
BUT I PROMISE YOU, WONG--THAT ONCE I HAVE FOSTERED THIS MAGIC--ONCE I HAVE MADE IT MY OWN--
--I WILL FIND A WAY TO BRING IMEI BACK TO YOU!
YOU--YOU CAN DO THIS?! I-I--
NO! I DO NOT BELIEVE YOU!
I PUT MY FAITH IN YOU BEFORE AND IMEI IS DEAD!
WE BOTH KNOW THE FUTILITY OF MY HOLDING THAT GUN ON YOU EARLIER--BUT I WANTED YOU TO SEE MY FEELINGS--
I WANT YOU DEAD.
I KNOW.
PLEASE, WONG...
...TRUST ME.
EARN IT.

NOT LONG AGO, YOU WERE MY FRIEND-- MY AIDE...
...IT GRIEVES ME TO SEE YOU IN SUCH PAIN.
WOULD THAT I COULD RETURN YOUR HEART'S DESIRE TO YOU NOW...
...BUT THIS POWER IS STILL UNFAMILIAR TO ME...
...AND MORE URGENT MATTERS DEMAND MY IMMEDIATE ATTENTION!
HE DRAWS THE ENERGIES TO HIM--
--SURROUNDING HIMSELF WITH THE UNTAPPED POTENTIAL FOR CHANGE THAT PERVADES THE WORLD AROUND US--
PRO-ACTIVE, RE-ACTIVE, ACCIDENTAL, FORCED--
--ARMING HIMSELF WITH THE POWER OF COINCIDENCE-- ARMING HIMSELF--

--FOR A BATTLE WITH MADNESS!
THE HOUSE CONTINUES TO OOZE WITH THE FOUL MAGIC! I CAN FEEL IT ASSAULTING ME--
I MUST DO WHAT I CAN TO MAINTAIN WHATEVER CONTAINMENT SPELL WAS IN PLACE--
--AND WH LE THAT MAY GAIN ME ACCESS--
CHANGE.
KRK
--IT MAY ALSO LOCK ME INSIDE THIS HORROR SHOW!
ELDR
WASTE AND FILTH--
--DECAY AND--
BY THE ANCIENT ONE!


WHAT DEVIANCE IS AT WORK HERE?
IT IS A NIGHTMARE OF INDUSTRIAL WASTE AND ECOLOGICAL ABERRATION--
--OF STINKING, STAGNANT WATERS AND CONTAMINATED EARTH--
--OF THICK, NOXIOUS AIR AND TOXIC LIFE!
IT IS A BLASPHEMY AGAINST NATURE--

-- AND A HOPE FOR THE FUTURE...?!
DO YOU LIKE IT?
WHO--?!
IT IS E'ERYTHING WE ARE--
--E'ERYTHING WE WILL NEED TO 'ECOME!
WE 'ILT TOMORROW HERE, IN ALL ITS GLORY!
YOU CAN SEE IT, CAN'T YOU? YOU CAN SEE THE 'UTURE?
LET'S JUST SEE WHAT I CAN SEE!
ALTHOUGH I BELIEVE IT WOULD BE FAR MORE EFFICIENT WERE I ABLE TO SEE THROUGH YOUR EYES!

SHE STANDS TRANSFIXED, AS IMAGES TUMBLE FROM HER MIND--
--REVEALING TO DOCTOR STRANGE THE TERRIFYING TABLEAU OF HER RECENT MEMORY!
HER INDUCTION INTO A COVEN WHOSE DOCTRINE WAS SUPPOSEDLY ONE OF PROGRESSIVE HUMANITY--
--BELIEVING THAT, AS THE DOMINANT SPECIES, MANKIND SHOULD NOT AVOID ITS CURRENT MARCH TOWARDS ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION--
--BUT RATHER EMBRACE IT, EVOLVING INTO THE ALTERED, MUTATED POST-HUMANS WHO COULD SURVIVE IN AN ECOLOGICALLY BARREN WORLD.
GARNERING MAGIC FROM THE SYZYGY--THE CELESTIAL CONVERGENCE OF THE PLANETS OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM--
--THE COVEN WAS EMPOWERED TO CREATE THIS REALM, WHERE TRIALS AND EXPERIMENTATIONS COULD RUN AMOK--
--IN HOPES OF BEING GUIDED TOWARDS THEIR APOCALYPTIC FUTURE!

SO THAT'S IT! THEY'RE USING A MAGIC OF CHANGE TO CREATE CHANGE--TO PERPETUATE IT--CAUSING A MASSIVE CHAIN REACTION--
--AND THE RESULTANT MAGICAL FEEDBACK IS WHAT'S SPILLING OUT INTO THE OUTSIDE WORLD!
AND IT'S GETTING WORSE! IF I'M TO END THESE... ATROCITIES, I MUST LOCATE THE SOURCE OF THIS MAGIC--AND DESTROY IT!
BUT, WHAT ALSO CONCERNS ME IS THAT THEY, TOO, UTILIZED THE SYZYGY TO DERIVE THEIR MAGIC--
--WHICH I ALSO ACCESSED TO TAP INTO THE CATASTROPHE MAGIC!
BUT HOW COULD THEY HAVE KNOWN OF THE SYZYGY? WHO COULD HAVE--eh?
YOU ARE NOT CHANGED. YOU'RE A STRANGER HERE.
YES.
YOU ARE A BLIGHT--

--YOU SHOULD BE CHANGED. CHANGE IS GOOD.
ODDLY ENOUGH--
--I WAS ABOUT TO SAY THE VERY SAME THING.
SUDDENLY, THE SCENE EXPLODES, AS CHANGE BECOMES THE DOCTOR'S DEFENSE! CLOTHES TURN TO CHAINS! ARMS TO INSECTS--
I WILL CHANGE YOU. I WILL ORNISH YOU.
HMMM.
--LEGS TO ROPE!
I WILL CHEW YOUR ANKLES OFF.

HCK!
THERE. I DID IT. HE'S CHANGED!
THUD
WHAT DO YOU WANT DONE WITH THE BODY?
HE WIELDED AN INCREDIFLE 'AGIC! POWERFUL!
IT'S 'ELIEVED 'THAT SOME AFRICAN TRIVES WOULD DEVOUR THE 'ODIES OF THEIR SHAMAN OR WISE 'AN SO THAT THEIR 'AGIC AND WISDOM WOULD FE PASSED ON.
WE COULD ALWAYS USE SOME 'ORE 'AGIC--

SO, HOLD THE DINNER DOWN, 'OYS--
--WE'RE GOING TO RECYCLE!
TO BE CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE--IN
DOCTOR STRANGE
#61 "EARTHQUAKE LOGIC; SEISMICS!"